

# Transportation News

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ***IDOT and ISP Announce Winter Preparations and Urge Drivers To Stress Safety Message: “Ice and Snow – Take it Slow”***

**SPRINGFIELD** —Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Secretary Milton R. Sees at a news conference today urged motorists to start preparing themselves and their vehicles for winter driving conditions. IDOT crews and Illinois State Police (ISP) are making final preparations to get the state’s frontline winter teams and equipment ready for emergency operations for the upcoming snow and ice season.

“Snow removal is a safety issue and a top priority for the Department. IDOT has a proven track record of effective, timely snow and ice removals from our roadways and this year will be no different,” said Secretary Sees. “Winter weather will be here soon enough, so it’s important for motorists to get ready now because Illinois weather can become dangerous in a matter of minutes. We want to assure every Illinois driver that safety is our first priority.”

Secretary Sees also stressed the department’s commitment to adopting salt conservation practices and other conversation efforts that were feasible in this challenging economic time as salt prices have sky-rocketed. This conservation effort will allow us to better utilize the resources available to IDOT and still provide a safe means of travel.

During the 2008 winter season, more than 3,900 IDOT employees and more than 1,900 pieces of equipment will be deployed as needed to keep state routes clear and passable. Last year, IDOT spent \$86,178,290 million dollars on snow removal efforts, that cost includes an estimated 840,054 tons of salt and 997,379 labor hours.

For years, ISP and IDOT have worked together to urge motorists to drive defensively in winter weather.

"The Illinois State Police reminds motorists to prepare for adverse driving conditions and allow sufficient time to reach their destination," said ISP Director Larry G. Trent. "Weather conditions can change rapidly and make for hazardous driving, so motorists should make sure their vehicles are properly maintained, the emergency car care kit is updated, and everyone in the vehicle is

fastened in their seat belt.”

Director Trent also reminded motorists that Troopers will be enforcing Scott's Law, or the “Move Over Law”, which requires drivers to yield to moving emergency vehicles, including highway maintenance vehicles, displaying oscillating, rotating, or flashing lights. Additionally, a driver is required to change lanes, if safe to do so, or reduce speed and proceed with caution when approaching a stationary emergency vehicle displaying flashing warning lights.

Other safety tips include:

- Plan ahead and make sure before you head out: is your trip necessary?
- Don't crowd the plow – remember, a snowplow operator's field of vision is restricted. You may see them, but they may not see you.
- Watch out for black ice – roads that appear clear may be treacherous. Take it slow when approaching intersections, off-ramps, bridges, and shady areas – all are prone to black ice. Always keep your gas tank at least two-thirds full to prevent the vehicle's fuel line from freezing.
- Dress warmly for the weather—dress in layers of loose-fitting, lightweight clothing in anticipation of unexpected winter weather emergencies.
- Do not travel unless absolutely necessary—if you do have to make a trip, check the forecast and plan ahead with safety in mind.
- Make sure someone is aware of your travel route.
- Always carry an emergency car care kit that contains jumper cables, flares or reflectors, windshield washer fluid, a small ice scraper, traction material, blankets, non-perishable food and a first aid kit.
- Carry a cell phone.
- Always wear a safety belt.

Motorists are urged to check travel conditions before any trip.

You may get interstate condition information by calling 1-800-452-IDOT (4368) or on the internet at [www.gettingaroundillinois.com](http://www.gettingaroundillinois.com).